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NEWS

Winchester legislators help push Economic Development Bill across finish line

November 26, 2024 . 12:00 PM — 3 min read

The Massachusetts Legislature has passed a major economic development bill that will position the Commonwealth for continued economic growth and leadership in life sciences and biotech, offshore wind energy development and other climatetech, artificial intelligence, and other sectors of the economy. FILE PHOTO

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis:

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Sens. Jason Lewis and Pat Jehlen and Reps. Michael Day and Michelle Ciccolo joined their colleagues in the Massachusetts Legislature to pass a major economic development bill that will position the Commonwealth for continued economic growth and leadership in life sciences and biotech, offshore wind energy development and other climatetech, artificial intelligence, and other sectors of the economy.

The bill also includes numerous additional provisions to strengthen healthcare, education, small businesses, and communities across the state.

“This major economic development bill provides significant new investments in our state’s economy and will advance Massachusetts’ global leadership and competitiveness,” said Lewis. “I’m also very pleased that two pieces of legislation that I’ve been championing for several years were included in this package: the Educator Diversity Act to strengthen our K-12 teacher workforce, and a bill that strengthens our healthcare workforce by providing a pathway for foreign-trained physicians to become fully licensed and practice in Massachusetts.”

“I am glad to see that two pieces of legislation that I have been working on for many years made it into this comprehensive bill,” said Jehlen. “These great additions to economic development include funding for small properties acquisition which will help us respond to the housing crisis and childcare as a campaign expense which will enable more people with children to run for public office.”

“I am very happy we got this legislation, which makes critical, wide-ranging investments in our economy, over the finish line,” said Day. “From supporting small businesses to providing targeted investments across our life science sector, this bill ensures Massachusetts has the tools we need to spur growth throughout all areas of the state and lead the way to a more prosperous future for all residents.”

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"Our lead in life sciences and biotech is the result of smart investments by the Commonwealth and thoughtful partnerships with the private sector," said Ciccolo. "I was thrilled to support the continuation of these programs, as well as new bonding to bolster the growing climatetech industry in our communities. Massachusetts can continue to lead the way in cutting-edge technologies while also supporting our people and our planet."

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Key provisions of An Act relative to strengthening Massachusetts' economic leadership include:

• Advancing Massachusetts' global leadership in the life sciences and biotech industry with a $500 million bond authorization for the Life Sciences Breakthrough Fund.

• Launching a new effort to make Massachusetts a leader in climatetech with a $400 million bond authorization to support the development of offshore wind energy and to foster innovation and deployment of new climate technologies.

• Funding the MassWorks Infrastructure Program with an additional $400 million bond authorization to support local public infrastructure projects and create jobs.

• Investing $100 million to advance the development of artificial intelligence solutions in Massachusetts.

• Supporting small businesses by establishing a five-year pilot pr
assist businesses in acquiring surety bonds.

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• Entering Massachusetts into the national nurse licensure compact to help alleviate the nursing workforce challenges facing the healthcare sector.

• Strengthening the physician workforce by creating a pathway for physicians previously authorized to practice medicine outside the United States to be able to become licensed and practice in the Commonwealth (legislation that was sponsored by Lewis).

• Strengthening the K-12 educator workforce with the inclusion of the Educator Diversity Act (also legislation that was sponsored by Lewis).

• Permitting locally produced craft beer to be sold at farmers markets, which is already allowed for wine and cider.

• Ensuring ticketing transparency by requiring sellers to list the actual prices of tickets and banning automated ticket purchasing software, known as bots, which drive up prices.

• Allowing for the environmental cleanup and construction of a new soccer stadium and waterfront park in Everett, and stipulating that no public funding may be used for stadium construction.

• Overhauling the state's fragmented public health system to ensure strong public health protections for all residents regardless of race, income, or zip code.

• Requiring all school districts to notify students prior to graduating from high school of the availability of FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and to provide students with information on financial aid options for higher education.

• Authorizing public agencies and municipalities to enter into pr agreements for public works contracts when such an agreement is in the

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best interest of the public agency or municipality.

• Modernizing Massachusetts civil service laws to give municipalities more options in filling job vacancies while giving qualified job seekers more opportunities to find a match.

After final passage in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, Gov. Maura Healey signed the bill into law on Nov. 20, 2024.

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and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate strengthen fair housing protections for renters, buyers

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

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The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

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Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester

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Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On

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High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

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Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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